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Birch Society Airing Is Needed

The upsurge of interest in and criticism of the John Birch Society, an ultra-ultra-conservative group to whom Dwight D. Eisenhower and Chief Justice Earl Warren reputedly are "Communists" (together with such other "Reds" as the late John Foster Dulles, and his brother, Allen, head of the Central Intelligence Agency) cannot fail to bring to the historical mind a recollection of the secretive Know Nothing Party in this country a little over a century ago.

At that time the ultra-ultra conservatives were concerned with depriving the foreign-born of their votes and their growing influence. The Know Nothings didn't get anywhere in particular, but they certainly created a lot of hard feelings while they were at it.

For this reason the outbreak of this newest lot, named for a missionary and Army captain who was killed by Chinese Communists while on an intelligence assignment, may strike many people as just a repetition of an old, sad story—the perennial irreconcilables whose only satisfaction in life is hating everybody else. In a word, cranks—not to be seriously considered.

However, the current generation of Amer-

icans knows full well the havoc irresponsible libelers and slanderers can raise in our democratic society. If Americans cannot be trusted by fellow Americans, the whole fabric by which we live tears apart.

The founder of the group, Richard M. and lamely, has repudiated some of the charges attributed to him—at least as far as the Birch Society's "blue book" is concerned. The denial, however, seems not to have calmed a number of Congressional critics, who are demanding an investigation, and the Justice Department has admitted that the Attorney General is "concerned."

It seems to this newspaper that a proper investigation is thoroughly in order. If the group is not subversive, it should be given a chance to demonstrate it. But, it should also be made to realize, as all Americans should, that the right of free speech, like other liberties, stops where it causes damage to other Americans.

Pennsylvania's Congressman, Walter, chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, doubts that his unit has jurisdiction—but if destroying American morale with innuendoes about honored leaders is not un-American, what is?